

Toastmasters of Paris

Jan. 21, 2025



A HUG IS A HANDSHAKE FROM THE HEART

After welcoming us to the second meeting of 2025, Vicki introduced Anaëlle as Toastmaster of the Evening.

September 21 is International Hug Day, Anaëlle announced, hence the night's theme. Hugs are good for health and happiness, she told us, suggesting that we should "feel free to hug!"

THE TOAST

Josep presented a toast that Vincent, unwell, had helped him to write. Vincent wished us "the most important gift in life: good health." He reminded us that we should look after each other: Toastmasters is a community, but in many ways it is more like a family, and Vincent expressed gratitude for the messages and kind words he has received from club members, which "meant more than you might realize."

THE JOKE

Siobhan had considered a group hug that could be turned into a joke; instead she had decided to turn the joke into a group hug by telling the joke and letting the members finish with the punchline.

My granddaughter screamed in pain, and I ran into the garden to see her standing by the flowers.

"What's the matter?"

"I bent down to smell the brose."

I had to correct her. "There's no B in rose,"

And she replied -

(Scroll down for the punchline)

THE WORD

Hyunjoo chose **Resolution** as the Word of the Evening, used by Vicki, Anaëlle, Yannis, Siobhan, and Amélie.

CONGRATULATIONS

Lars introduced Pathways for our guests. He congratulated Anaëlle who finished her Pathway at the last meeting, completing all five levels and presenting around fifteen speeches.

CONTEST NEWS UPDATE

Suzanne reminded us that the next meeting is "an exceptional event" as we are holding the club contest. Interruptions will be kept to a minimum, so please arrive by 7:15 at the latest. "Come early or you'll be locked out!" she warned.

REMINDER:

There are still positions to be filled, so please contact Suzanne if you want to volunteer or if you have questions about the roles - Sergeant-at-Arms and Timers needed.

'HUGS' TABLE TOPICS - ALEX

JOSEP -

IF HE WERE AMBASSADOR
TO A NEW-FOUND RACE, HE WOULD
EXPLAIN HUGS DIPLOMATICALLY -
HE'S NOT SURE HOW THE NEWS
WOULD BE RECEIVED!

SIOBHAN -

IF HUGS WERE OUTLAWED,
WE WOULD ALL SUFFER.
PEOPLE - EVEN THE RETICENT
BRITS! - NEED TOUCH.

DORA -

EXPERIENCED AN UNEXPECTED
HUG WHEN AN APPARENTLY
HOMELESS MAN ASKED HER
FOR ONE. "I FELT LIKE
HE REALLY NEEDED IT!"

VICKI -

A HUG IS WORTH 1,000- WORDS,
SHE AGREES. 'LOVE HAS ITS
OWN LANGUAGE... WHAT
WE WANT TO EXPRESS IS
...THE SPIRIT AND
THE HEART.'

SILVIA -

HUGS AREN'T RESTRICTED TO
LIVING THINGS, AND SILVIA
TOLD US ABOUT HUGGING
HER 'MANY CHILDREN'-
CHILDHOOD DOLLS.

Speeches and Evaluations



THE 20 CENT QUESTION

Speaker: Lars

Evaluator: Yannis

Admitting that we all encounter problems, Lars told us about the difficulties he had experienced with his washing machine. It began making "a terrible, terrible noise" and left the laundry soaking wet. With a three-year-old in the home, he felt sure that the child was responsible. However, he warned us against being narrow-minded when we approach problems, as further investigation revealed a twenty-cent piece lodged in the workings!

Yannis noted Lars' confidence and ease, moving around the lectern and using gestures to show counting and to describe the machine's movements. It was a great and relatable story, and Lars' smiles and laughter conveyed enthusiasm. Lars used pauses well but Yannis suggested he could vary these to play more with suspense. A second piece of advice was to keep notes in his hand rather than having to return to the lectern. A final challenge was for Lars to record himself – which seems like good advice for all of us!



MY LIFETIME MENTOR

Speaker: Amelie

Evaluator: Maria

Amelie noted she is more often mentor than mentee. However, she told us about two women who had acted as mentors for her, and then she focused on the one person who has been her 'lifetime' influence. She outlined how he was supportive, respectful, and always committed. Although he died ten years ago, she still refers to him – her father – and follows his advice.

Amelie had made this 'Toastmasters subject' lively, Maria said. By discussing her experiences, she had been able to describe the role and task of the mentor, "talking about the subject without talking about it!" Maria noted that Amelie had been at ease with this subject, which she had made "original and personal." She praised Amelie's eye contact and the clarity and construction of the speech but wondered if Amelie might have considered the roles of mentor (her father) and coach (the women) differed, and she thought it might have been useful if we had been given some specific tips about how to be a good Toastmasters mentor.



I DIDN'T EXPECT IT
Speaker: Anaelle
Evaluator: Ava

"Don't you hate it when..." Anaelle opened, telling us about things people said she'd enjoy, but which she was convinced she'd hate, only to discover much later that the person had been right after all! - Specifically, in this case, gym classes. Over the years, she attempted various sports but only when Anaelle was close to burnout did she discover her real need of exercise. She is now exercising five times weekly: this she calls "my new normal," confessing "I didn't expect it!"

Ava commended Anaelle's willingness to take on the role of speaker when she was also Toastmaster of the Evening - "Kudos!" She enjoyed Anaelle's narrative of a personal story (taking us from her childhood through a difficult period, to today) which helped us to relate to the message, "so honest, so real." Ava enjoyed the humor of the speech, suggesting that Anaelle could have "leaned in harder" to the sarcasm. She noted Anaelle's ability to use tones and looks to convey her feelings, and thought using extra pauses here would allow the audience time to react to these. Finally, she recommended playing with the "dueling" in the story to exaggerate the difference between the "annoying but right" challenger and Anaelle's reacting voice.

**DID YOU KNOW OUR CLUB IS AWARDED POINTS FOR MEMBERS' PROGRESS?
IF YOU HAVE A SPEECH TO GIVE, PLEASE CONTACT LARS!**

THE JOKE -

My granddaughter screamed in pain, and I ran into the garden to see her standing by the flowers.

"What's the matter?"

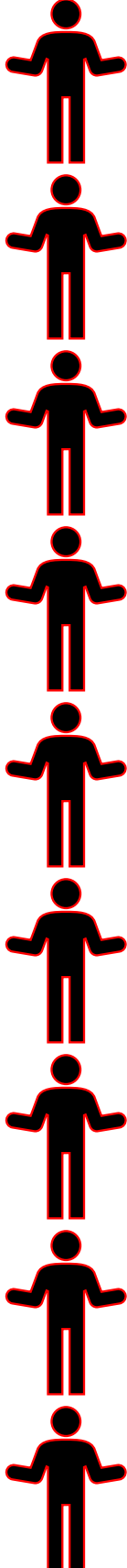
"I bent down to smell the brose."

I had to correct her. "There's no B in rose,"

And she replied,

"There was in that one!"

Guests' Evaluations



Omar, a first-timer to Toastmasters, had been looking for an anglophone club and found us via the Internet. He said the atmosphere was welcoming and was interested to see how the meeting worked. He is looking forward to a return visit.

Tiana was a member of Toastmasters about ten years ago, but this was her first English-speaking meeting. She wants “kind people” who will help her to “hone her public speaking skills.” Afterwards, she commented on the blend of seriousness and fun involved in the meeting.

Dora, a former Toastmaster, was on her second visit to the group. She told us she had enjoyed herself once again and was now looking forward to joining the club. (You’ll be very welcome!)

Chris, whose wife had signed him up to the last meeting, had promised to return – and we were delighted that he did, especially as this time he signed up without the push! – “I loved it, so I’m back!”

Christina was a newcomer to Toastmasters. She hadn’t been sure what to expect other than meeting “some cool ex-pats” but said it had been “slightly daunting.” (After a hesitation, she admitted, it was “terrifying!”) Nevertheless, she claimed it was an “amazing” experience - a duality of feelings that many of us will remember from our first visits!

Jean told us that she was impressed by the three-minute speeches, as they were all so different. She said she hadn’t had the chance to speak (but next time?!).

Anne described herself as “the quiet one, very introverted growing up.” Having found Toastmasters on social media, she feels it would fit well with her business goals for the year. Although she has facilitated many workshops, she found the Toastmasters meeting structure “totally different.”

Chadia had heard this was “a wonderful place to practice public speaking in English.” She laughed that she was “much more comfortable” watching procedures from a guest seat and was impressed by members’ creativity and the humor.

Jesus, who has been in Paris for six months, said he had felt welcome from the first minute he walked through the door, and is looking forward to coming back again. (Please do!)

General Evaluation

Anaëlle introduced Suzanne as General Evaluator, thanking her for standing in for Benoît (unwell.)

Suzanne's comments -

- We had got off to a late start. (Suzanne reminded us that we must start early next time for the contest.)
- There was some role doubling. This is a shame in a club of thirty-three members.
- Suzanne noted we had two first-timers tonight - Hyungjoo had taken on Word of the Evening for the first time! Suzanne recommended that if possible, Word of the Evening should be related to the evening's theme. It was Yannis' first time as evaluator, and Suzanne stressed that this was a particularly challenging role, as it is necessary to improvise around notes.
- Suzanne praised Alex for his excellent table topics. They were open subjects that led to discussion rather than questions that could only be answered a certain way. She specified that the table topic should be simple enough to be said once and that it was not supposed to be repeated. She commended Dora: despite being a guest, she had the courage to take on a table topic!
- The meal was delicious (goat cheese salad entrée, salmon main course, and Opera dessert).
- Suzanne thanked the guests for coming and the contest team for their good work in preparing for the contest.

Hugs (and ribbons) to Winners!

Siobhan, table topics



Amelie, speech



Ava, evaluator



NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4th - COME AND JOIN THE FUN!